

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 20, 2006

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 27, 2006

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 18, 2006

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2005–06 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2920**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Leno**  
**(Coauthors: Assembly Members Berg, Goldberg, Hancock,**  
**Koretz, Laird, Nation, Pavley, Saldana, and Yee)**  
**(Coauthors: Senators Kehoe and Kuehl)**

February 24, 2006

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An act to add Sections 9103 and 9103.1 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to seniors.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2920, as amended, Leno. Seniors.

Existing law, the Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act, establishes the California Department of Aging in the California Health and Human Services Agency. Existing law sets forth the duties and powers of the department.

This bill would require the department to ensure that programs and services provided through the Older Americans Act and the Mello-Granlund Older Californians Act in each planning and service area are available to all older adults regardless of specified characteristics or circumstances, or by association with a person or persons with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics or circumstances, that restrict an individual's ability to perform normal daily tasks or that threaten his or her capacity to live independently.

The bill would require the department to require that each area agency on aging includes the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors in their needs assessment and area plans and to provide technical assistance to the area agencies on aging for the training of all program staff, contractors, and volunteers regarding the unique needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors. *The bill would require that the department adopt regulations necessary to implement the bills provisions only after consultation with specified entities.*

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1     SECTION 1. Section 9103 is added to the Welfare and  
2     Institutions Code, to read:  
3     9103. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:  
4     (a) Recent studies have shown that lifelong experiences of  
5     marginalization place lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender  
6     (LGBT) seniors at high risk for isolation, poverty, homelessness,  
7     and premature institutionalization. Moreover, many LGBT  
8     seniors are members of multiple underrepresented groups, and as  
9     a result, are doubly marginalized. Due to these factors, many  
10    LGBT seniors avoid accessing elder programs and services, even  
11    when their health, safety, and security depend on it.  
12    (b) LGBT seniors often lack social and family support  
13    networks available to non-LGBT seniors. They may face  
14    particular health risks, as disease prevention strategies often  
15    ignore LGBT seniors, and HIV and AIDS drug trials generally do  
16    not include older participants.  
17    (c) LGBT seniors are denied many vital financial benefits  
18    provided to heterosexual married couples. For example,  
19    surviving same-sex partners are denied the social security  
20    benefits that married couples are provided, and may face heavy  
21    taxes on the transfer of assets upon the death of a partner.  
22    Moreover, even under California law, LGBT seniors are denied  
23    equal long-term care insurance protections. This costs LGBT  
24    seniors hundreds of millions of dollars each year in lost benefits.  
25    (d) The number of people 65 years of age and older in  
26    California is estimated to double to 6.5 million by the year 2020,

1 thereby increasing the number of LGBT seniors who are  
2 receiving inadequate services.

3 (e) Ensuring that the needs of LGBT seniors as well as other  
4 underrepresented groups are adequately assessed during the  
5 planning and development of programs and services will increase  
6 access to the programs administered by the California  
7 Department of Aging and the area agencies on aging.

8 (f) California leads the nation in the protections it affords to  
9 LGBT persons. As failure to meet the needs of LGBT seniors is  
10 a problem of national scope, including LGBT seniors, and other  
11 underrepresented groups in need of assessment and area plan  
12 process will help the state to be a model for change in other states  
13 and at the federal level.

14 SEC. 2. Section 9103.1 is added to the Welfare and  
15 Institutions Code, to read:

16 9103.1. (a) The department shall ensure that programs and  
17 services provided through the Older Americans Act and under  
18 this division in each planning and service area are available to all  
19 older adults regardless of physical or mental disabilities,  
20 language barriers, cultural or social isolation, including that  
21 caused by actual or perceived racial and ethnic status, including,  
22 but not limited to, African-American, Hispanic, American Indian,  
23 and Asian American, ancestry, national origin, religion, sex,  
24 gender identity, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation,  
25 or any other basis set forth in Section 12921 of the Government  
26 Code, or by association with a person or persons with one or  
27 more of these actual or perceived characteristics, that restrict an  
28 individual's ability to perform normal daily tasks or that threaten  
29 his or her capacity to live independently.

30 (b) The department shall require that each area agency on  
31 aging include the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender  
32 seniors in their needs assessment and area plans.

33 (c) The department shall provide technical assistance to the  
34 area agencies on aging for the training of all program staff,  
35 contractors, and volunteers regarding the unique needs of the  
36 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors.

37 (d) *The department shall adopt any regulations necessary to*  
38 *implement this section only after consultation with the area*

- 1 *agencies on aging and the California Association of Area*
- 2 *Agencies on Aging.*

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